

METTA WORLD PEACE VISITS CAPITOL HILL

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On February 15, 2013, Metta World Peace (MWP), Heidi Buech of Xcel University and I paid a visit to Washington, DC. It went relatively smoothly MWP played in the game against the LA Clippers the night we left and almost missed his flight. After we landed, we went straight to Capitol Hill and the day went very fast.

First, we met with Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA) and her staff. They updated us on the bill (HR 628, the Mental Health in Schools Act) that she introduced two days before we arrived with Senator Al Franken. The next meeting was with the House Democratic Leader, Honorable Nancy Pelosi and her staff. We discussed mental health and the great need for more services across the country.



The next meeting was with members that served on the Democratic House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force's mental health component; Rep. Ron Barber (D-AZ), Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA), Rep. Grace Napolitano (D-CA) and Rep. Bobby Scott (D-VA). A press conference followed:
<https://demsgov.box.com/s/0qs61z54n8q1a2gr1ec4>.

We enjoyed lunch with individuals that represented various mental health groups, such as Brian Altman, the Legislative Director from SAMHSA; Trevor Summerfield, the Manager of Federal Policy for the American Foundation for

Suicide Prevention; Active Minds representatives; a representative from the National Council for Behavioral Health; a representative from School-Based Mental Health Services; and representatives from the Entertainment Industries Council.



After lunch, we met with various Republicans, including Congressman Phil Roe (R-TN), Congressman Glenn Thompson (R-PA), a ranking member for the Appropriations Committee and lastly with the honorable John Boehner.

Almost every representative we met with disclosed that they themselves or a family member struggled with mental health and/or addiction issues. Each representative expressed concern for the health of Americans. Metta World Peace discussed his history, his work for Los Angeles County and the development of his non-profit organization, XCEL University, <http://xceluniversity.com/>.



The representatives we spoke with during our visit talked about parity and essential benefits (Affordable Care Act), and we discussed California's reporting laws (Tarasoff and Ewing) and the successes of the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA). Mental health will clearly be a major topic of discussion in the months ahead in DC and with the rest of the nation.